

SHAWNIE WADE

SARAH J. PRICHARD



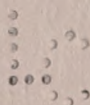
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SHAWNIE WADE

BY

SARAH J. PRICHARD



BOSTON
RICHARD G. BADGER
THE GORHAM PRESS

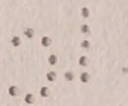
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PREFACE

The story of "Shawnie Wade" has all the fire, vividness, and thrilling intensity which characterized the romances of a past generation. Thirty years ago the author was a frequent contributor to the leading magazines of the day, and a well known writer of books for children. A history of her native town—Waterbury, Connecticut—from 1673-1783, a work evincing careful research and rare narrative ability, was also from her pen.

Challenged to write a sensational story, Miss Prichard essayed the task or the sport. "Shawnie Wade" was the result. The manuscript was submitted to Dr. J. G. Holland, then editor of the "Century," who was so interested in the tale that he wrote to Miss Prichard: "I read it aloud, every word of it, before I went to bed." It is needless to add that the manuscript was accepted and paid for. Time went on, and the story not appearing, an inquiry led to the statement by the editors that, considering the irritated feeling then existing between the North and South, its publication, at that time, did not seem advisable.

PREFACE

At Dr. Holland's death the manuscript was still unpublished. Mr. Gilder, who succeeded Dr. Holland as editor of the "Century," returned the manuscript, unread by him, to the author with the explanation that while he knew that Dr. Holland thought well of the story, yet the magazine was so overwhelmed with material, that it seemed best to begin the new administration by clearing the editorial desk.

No further attempt was made to dispose of the manuscript and it lay forgotten for many years. On Miss Prichard's death, which occurred in February, 1909, it was the judgment of her friends that a story so strange in plot, so engaging in style, and so compelling in interest should be given to the public.

The reader will peruse the following pages with absorbed attention, and as he lays down the volume he cannot well refrain from reflecting on the significant changes in the art of story telling, both in theme and technique, which have taken place within a generation.

CHARLES ALLEN DINSMORE.

Waterbury, Conn., May, 1909.

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A SCHOOL IN NEW HAVEN

CHAPTER I

A School in New Haven

THERE came one evening to a boarding-school for young ladies, in the city of New Haven, a gentleman, whose errand was announced in the following manner.

The size of the man gave a certain import to his words, for he loomed up nearly to the ceiling as he entered the reception room of Miss Harris, pushing before him a young girl who seemed in no wise eager or willing to be presented.

"Madam," he said, addressing Miss Harris, "you keep school!"

"I do, sir."

"For money, I suppose?"

"Quite right, sir."

"Well, here is money, a thousand dollars of it—and here is the girl! She is my daughter, Shawnie Wade. You may keep her until the money is gone, or I come again."

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"Go and shake hands with Miss Harris! Tut! tut! She won't eat you!"

Shawnie gave a shriek such as never before had pierced the ears of her hearers, and struck out her hands toward her father—grasping him with all her might.

"I sha'n't stay! I'll run away and be lost in the cane-brakes!" she said.

"Well! you may, Shawnie, but I shall not be here to hunt you up, mind! Good-bye, my child—you know I want you to shine when you get back home."

"Stop, sir! one moment, if you please," quickly spoke Miss Harris, for already the man was at the hall entrance. "I would like to know what your daughter is to study; what she is to be educated for!"

"I can't stop," he said, in a low tone. "I will write to you later. Watch her closely a while. There's no telling how she'll take it."

Shawnie was "taking it" by standing, still as a statue, on that figure of the carpet where her father had left her, when Miss Harris re-entered the room.

"Sit down, my dear, and tell me a little

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about yourself. How old are you?" questioned the lady.

Miss Harris's words would have been quite as effective, had they been addressed to the figure in, instead of that upon, the carpet, for neither stirred.

"Do you hear me, Miss Wade?" asked Miss Harris, evidently determined to move the girl to speech.

A something that might have been a smile, had it remained long enough for the eye to catch the picture, flitted across Shawnie's face, and then it was more rigid than before.

"Young lady! I never permit my pupils to be rude to me, I shall send you to stay by yourself until you recover your powers of speech."

Miss Harris rang a bell, and immediately thereafter a servant appeared, to whom it was said, "Mary, you will conduct this new pupil—her name is Miss Wade—to Number 17, and see that she has what she requires for the night."

"Stop, child! Where are you from to-day, and have you had any tea?"

"I sha'n't drink your tea! I don't believe it

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is good, and if your windows are not all nailed up tight, I will jump out before morning, and run off. I give you fair warning!" said Shawnie.

During this time, she had not once lifted her eyes from the carpet. Mary had already gathered up the traveling accompaniments of the new pupil. On hearing Shawnie's words, she quickly laid them down and said:

"Please, ma'am, I'm afraid of the young lady. I was in a place once where they kept crazy folks and I alluz said no money should tempt me to stay in another, though the wages is tempting sometimes."

"Knock her down!" cried Shawnie, taking a step forward, and dashing out her little fists.

It was the first time we had seen the girl's eyes. I can find nothing to illustrate them. Such peculiar combination in coloring and expression I have not elsewhere met. Just at the instant they were seen by me, they burned with sudden rage, which, Mary beholding, ran away from, and we heard her swift footsteps across the hall.

"Why didn't you strike her?" asked Shawnie. "We don't let 'em speak so!" addressing Miss Harris.

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"And we don't speak so, Miss Wade."

"Don't all white folks do just as they please?" she asked, with sudden asperity; going forward and seating herself on an ottoman near Miss Harris.

"If I were to do as I please, I should send you away at once."

"Then, why don't you?"

"I have good reasons for your remaining. You may go to bed now. The nine o'clock bell is ringing." "Harriet, will you oblige me by showing Miss Wade to her room, and remaining with her until she gets a little used to it?"

I was the "Harriet" referred to, and I went.

Along the hall we encountered the boarders on their way to the nine o'clock luncheon—which consisted of good bread and salt.

"I don't like them," whispered Shawnie, drawing herself away from contact with the little crowd, and nearer to me. "Who are they, and where are they going?"

"The school girls," I replied. "Study-hour is just past, and they are on their way to get bread and salt. Will you go in with me?"

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"No! My bag is full of lunch. You can eat it if you please! I wouldn't, because I wanted to make papa so sorry for me that he would take me back with him, and now I wouldn't taste it, not if I starved."

"Are you fond of your home?" I questioned, as we entered the designated room.

"No! It isn't much, only a big plantation down on the Mississippi. I'm always afraid down there. The water bursts out too often. I reckon it'll do it oftener than ever, now I'm gone."

"Then, aren't you glad to be away at a safe place, even though it be a school?" I asked.

"*You don't know much!* but maybe you will, some day. I feel so sorry for *you*," she said. Coming up to me, and suddenly casting down the articles she had hitherto held, she threw her arms around my neck and cried, quick, wild tears, with a vehemence that frightened me.

"Don't Shawnie!" I pleaded—the memory of certain homesick hours quick at my heart just then, prompting me to kiss the small

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brown cheek that rested on my shoulder out of pure sympathy.

The girl looked up. Never had I known a storm to burst with such vivid clearness. Her face gave no sign of the late tempest, but glowed and shone as she said: *You* are sorry for *me*? You make a great mistake. You were never more wrong in all your life. Tell me now—what would you give to love anybody well enough to cry about them like that?

"Nothing," I replied, "because I should be very sorry to do it."

"Sorry!" she uttered with unapproachable scorn. "*How* I pity you! It is sweet! It is delicious! I can think of but one better thing to do!"

"Well, what is that? It seems a miserable performance to me, but if you like it, very well!"

She turned herself about, the gaslight shining down her figure and showing every line of her face, while her strange eyes seemed to quiver with light, as she was saying the words: "I will tell you that better thing. It would be *to drink a cup of the red wine of his life*! Then I would die, because after

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that there could be nothing more, or better to live for."

"What did you come here for?" I asked.

"Because they cheated me—my own father and *he!* Have you any money?" she asked, shutting her small white teeth together with a sharp sound, that made a quaking in my flesh.

"Not much. Why?"

"I am glad of it, because, if you had, I might be tempted to ask you for it. Do you know," she added, with quickened accents, "my father never left me one cent. Was afraid I would get home if he did. I laughed at poor papa's simplicity in buying me dozens of new things in New York. More than I can possibly use up in three years. He never thought that I could sell them, but I will!"

"I must go now," I said. "I don't think you will get on very well here, unless you stop thinking about such things and try to be happy. Good night!"

"See here!" she exclaimed, "don't you want to know his name before you go? You had better hear it now, because it is the only time I am going to talk about him. He is

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my cousin, not very near though, and his name is Honor St. Honor."

"It is he"—you love so, I was about to ask, but amended by substituting "You cry so for?"

"I don't cry *for* Honor St. Honor! No, indeed! I cry for my own love of him. He isn't so splendid as some others. I don't more than half believe he is worth it, but if I choose to spend my love that way, I will!"

"How old are you, Shawnie Wade?"

"Fourteen, last Christmas day."

Such was the introduction of the new pupil into the school of Miss Harris, fifteen years ago.

The next morning I expected a report to the effect, "Miss Wade is missing," but, no, she was present at prayers and breakfast, although I found it extremely difficult to believe that the young girl then apparent, was she who had, the previous night, so astonished me.

Although I was assigned to occupy the same room, and did for nine months of that school year, she never once made allusion to the night of her arrival, nor to the subjects on which she had then spoken.

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If the size, name and dress had not corresponded with, had not held resemblance to, the surprising little figure Mr. Wade had pushed forward on his arrival, I should have believed, what I did not, by sheer force of circumstance, viz., that my room-mate was not the same girl, such change had come to her!

Miss Harris summoned me to her presence on the evening of the first day after the new pupil came, and asked me how I fared with the fiery Southerner.

"The trouble is, Miss Harris," I said, "that the fire has gone out completely. I am afraid Mary was right, and that we have an insane girl in school. I wish you would permit me to room by myself."

Miss Harris complimented me that night, as she never had done. She flattered my vanity to a degree that made me willing to take the risk of rooming with a crazy girl.

Once or twice I rallied Shawnie on the subject of her entrance into school, but I observed that a blue pallor was the only token of excitement she evinced, and she waived the subject with a kind of barbaric dignity that

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utterly forbade any nearer approach to familiarity on my part.

No pupil was so diligent as Shawnie Wade. Her whole life seem concentrated in the one desire to gain knowledge. During the first two months of her school life I doubt if she once addressed a person voluntarily, and although she received letters with great regularity from her father, no one ever saw her write one in return. She had no acquaintances in the city, and avoided making any, shunning the day-scholars, and holding no more intercourse with human beings than was essential to living in the same house.

She passed hours over her writing-books, copying, with slow patience, long pages of her lessons, and I often observed her transcribing what appeared to me to be old letters.

Time passed on, and the mid-winter holidays came. Shawnie grew restless then. She went often to the church—St. Paul's—and her chief enjoyment seemed to consist in gliding in when the organist was practising. She would crouch in one of the pews in the darkness and stay there motionless until the signs

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of leaving the church came. Then she would steal out as softly as she had entered.

Miss Harris permitted her great liberty, for her father had requested that she might have as much as was consistent with her safety, but, on occasions when she wandered about, Miss Harris sent some one to watch her movements.

No one marveled at the ignorance of Shawnie Wade, at her "backwardness" in the common branches of education, because she was from the South, but every one was utterly amazed at the exceeding progress she made in her studies. Music she actually revelled in; it was the one luxury she permitted herself to indulge in to excess.

The time came, in the summer following her admission to the school, when Mr. Wade was expected to arrive.

Miss Harris received the earliest intimation of his visit by letter, coupled with the request that Shawnie might be kept in ignorance of his coming. The lady imparted the secret to me.

One night, when Shawnie seemed unusually quiet, and even the music of a serenade did

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not move her, for we had been aroused from our sleep by it, I asked, "Shawnie, are you home-sick?"

"Home-sick!" she uttered, "I cannot tell what you mean!"

"Well, would you like to see your father, then?" She began to cry, not quick, impetuous tears, like those I had once seen her shed; but slow, solemn grieving seemed to possess her, and not anything that I could say lessened the weeping, so at last, touched to the heart by her sorrow, I turned traitor to my trust, and said, "You need not cry so, Shawnie, for he is coming."

She sprang up from the carpet, on which she had been sitting to listen to the music, and seized me by the shoulders—"Harriet Lord, who told you so?" she questioned, her eyes showing their vivid light, under the moon that was at its full.

"Miss Harris," I replied. "She has had a letter from him, but, Shawnie, *if* you betray me!—for I was not to tell. It was to be kept a secret from you until he came!"

"Harriet, I thank you. No one shall know that you told me. I am so glad, for surprises

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make me feel wicked. I don't like them. When is he to come?"

I told her, and time stole on until the day came around, when Miss Harris prepared to receive Col. Wade.

I shall never forget that evening. The summer-tide was at the full, and Shawnie was quivering with excitement as I laced the dress she wore. The girl could not stand up, and I was obliged to complete the dressing of her hair, in fact, to make her ready.

When the street-bell rang, at the hour when Mr. Wade was expected to arrive, Shawnie gave a stifled shriek, like one in mortal terror. Her eyes were wild, with what seemed to me to be an emotion of fear. I sought to soothe her, but in vain. The flowers I had fastened in her hair she chanced to see when passing the mirror. "Take them out!" she cried, "I can't let *him* see *me* wear flowers!"

"Miss Wade, Miss Harris wishes to see you in the drawing room," said a servant at the door.

I had not thought Shawnie deceitful, but, on that occasion, she suddenly suppressed all

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the emotion that she had so freely evinced before me, and asked:

"What does Miss Harris wish? Ask her to excuse me."

"I can't," said the girl, "there is company in the parlor, and I was told you must go right down."

"Very well!" she said, and then Shawnie Wade stood erect, and looked full into the mirror.

"Give me the flowers!" she said to me, reaching forth her hand for them, with imperial gesture. The flowers were blossoms from the woodland, that Shawnie had gathered in one of her recent outbreaks into wandering, vivid in coloring, and I thought she had looked extremely well in them.

She took the long sprays of skyey blue, and trailed them across her hair; then, half scornfully, fastened them in place, and turning to me said—it was the only reference to the night of her arrival that she ever made: "You were in the reception room when Shawnie Wade first made her entrance! Come with me now, and afterward tell me if I do credit to my opportunities since that time!"

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Drawn on, half by the spell in her voice, half by my own inherent curiosity, I followed her down the broad stairway, and to the entrance-door. It stood ajar. I heard the sound of Mr. Wade's voice once more. It seemed brighter, breezier than when he left Shawnie. He was saying, "You, Miss Harris, can have slight conception of what it has been to me to live so long without my little Tornado; but I suppose in the northern climate she has changed to a very proper and well-ordered storm. Climate does such wonders with certain natures."

Shawnie only paused to let him finish the sentence. Then she pushed open the door and walked into the room.

"Miss Wade, I thought to give you a pleasant surprise," said Miss Harris.

Mr. Wade sprang to his feet, hastened forward, and clasped Shawnie in his arms.

He kissed her forehead, not once or twice, but a dozen times, with southern impetuosity, completely crushing the flowers in her hair with his caresses.

"My darling!" he said. "I have counted the days to the time when I could claim you

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again! Have you no kiss for me, as a reward for all my waiting?"

Shawnie kissed him, quivering while she did it with strange agitation for a daughter. It was such contrast to the night when I had seen her cling to him as if all the world would be powerless to part her from him.

At this moment Miss Harris withdrew, doubtless thinking that her presence overawed the girl. Mr. Wade stayed his brief while and left, only to return a few days later, and invite me to accompany his daughter on a trip to the northward.

My happy star had not had the happiness in it to grant me familiarity with trips of travel, and that one I accepted and enjoyed to the full. It had been great pleasure to me to watch Shawnie Wade in the retirement of our school life, but on the highways of nature, I fear I forgot Shawnie and duty, for, upon my return, when questioned by Miss Harris concerning her behavior, I found that I was utterly unable to give any account of it.

Miss Harris evidently felt the keenest interest in everything that affected her southern pupil. I often watched her when she was

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utterly absorbed in watching Shawnie, and, more than once, I suspected that she followed her to and fro in her wanderings, for, soon after Shawnie's departure from the house, Miss Harris's followed—and, in their return, there was a similar concurrence of the event.

I left school at the close of that year. Shawnie Wade remained two years after my departure, and there came from time to time, into the quiet seclusion of my inland home, where I was doing my utmost by teaching a village school to return to my parents the store they had deprived themselves of for my education, reports of the brilliant career of Miss Wade. She was then a parlor-boarder in Miss Harris's school.

The years passed. One letter I received from Shawnie. It was written the night before she left school for the last time. She wrote, that "in looking over the events of her life"—I noticed that she seemed to give it date from the time she went to New Haven—"she found that she was deeply indebted to me. I had done much, more than I could possibly appreciate just then, to reconcile her to life, and to set her in the right path."

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She thanked me for it, with a tone of humility running through her words, such as I had never had glimpse of in school-days. She told me that she was going to the plantation on the Mississippi; that in all the years to come I might never hear again of her, but that she could never forget me.

I wrote in reply, but my letter elicited no response.

A HOSPITAL CAMP

CHAPTER II

A Hospital Camp

THE years came and went. My early youth was gone; my education paid for; and I was a school teacher still, when on the horizon of the Republic, gleamed the crimson streak of War.

One year later, I was doing my part of the strife in a hospital. It was in the West, and at our then most southern station in the Southwest.

We were near to a camp. Into the camp refugees were pouring by scores. At times, victims of illness, misfortune or starvation were sent to the hospital, where the means for their restoration were at hand.

I had not outgrown my native curiosity, and every new accession of numbers afforded fresh supply for my observation to feed upon. I liked to watch the men; to note the effect of trouble and sorrow on diverse bits of human nature, and then work my conclusion, in my imagination, into strange mosaics, with which,

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I sometimes fancied I could, in the future, interest the world, or such portion of it as should behold my work. To this end, when not detailed for special duty, I searched out opportunities for going down to the camp to watch the slave groups, the white faces, and whatsoever might turn into sight, in that military kaleidoscope.

My mosaics never came of the habit into anything more tangible than imaginings, but something else did, and it came in this manner.

Two days earlier than the time of which I write, a battle had been fought. Rumors came flying into camp and hospital of the great number of wounded men who were on their way to us. Every resource of the place was put into working order. Then we waited.

I had not seen much service among maimed and wounded soldiers, and a tremor came over me, as the time grew long, and I had hours in which to picture the coming scenes.

As a final escape from my own fancies, I walked across to the camp. It was upon a still, sunshiny afternoon, in one of the days when it seemed as though the earth had noth-

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ing to do but to stand still and let the sun and air pour over it.

On my way to the camp, I paused to watch a group. New-come freedom was evidently not a pleasure to the poor, bewildered beings, who were clustered about a bit of farm-fence, that had been miraculously spared from the deluge of demolition around. The slaves knew not what to do with freedom—it mystified them.

The two figures of the party that most attracted me were an old man who sat leaning upon a stick, with his dim eyes buried in the depth of air beyond, while his poor face worked convulsively, as if trying to make itself understood without vocal sign; and another—whether woman or child baffled my perception. It crouched close to the ground, hiding its face in the breadth of a scanty apron. The hand that held the apron was small, brown and well-made, and by the muscular grasp of it, I knew that its owner was strong to will and to do.

I was about to speak over the little figure, when a hand was uplifted by a woman in the group, whose name I later learned was Su-

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sanna, and a voice said "There isn't a spec o' use. She won't say nothing."

At that instant came a message announcing the near approach of the soldiers, and forgetting the old man and the girl—if girl it was—from that moment my whole being was given to the duties of the hospital.

I felt that mysterious buoyancy that sometimes comes to the soul from the great depth of the misery into which it has been plunged, and on which it floats, scarcely conscious whether the greater clinging is to the stars above, or the earth beneath.

Late that night I was bearing a pitcher of water through a long and ill-lighted passage, having at one end the hospital wards; at the other, the place we, out of courtesy, called the kitchen. Between these termini, on either side, were doors opening into store-rooms, and other apartments, that were seldom put to use.

Imperative need gave quickness to my footsteps on this occasion, and I did not pause, not even when I heard, or thought that I heard, a voice calling to me. I went on to my errand, but the instant it was done,

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I returned to the long passage, and walked slowly down its length, bearing a candle in my hand.

Some of the doors had been opened, and, in the haste that pervaded everything, had been left so.

I was startled by a voice coming from one of the rooms. It said, "Lady! will you kindly stop one minute?" I went into the apartment and found, lying upon the floor, a soldier. He wore the "Grey."

"I have been forgotten here," he said, "but I do not think it was meant to be so."

"I will go and call a surgeon," I said, and was at the door, when I was arrested by the words, "Stay, if you please. Only give me a little water and a moment's help to move my head!"

Water was at hand. I gave it, asking, "What is your hurt?"

He answered "Hand and foot. You will see that I am quite helpless." I held the candle down to the bare boards of the floor on which he lay, and saw two pools of blood that had oozed from wounds in his left ankle and right hand.

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Immediately I was at the door on the way for a surgeon, but the man recalled me with such earnest entreaty, that I returned to listen.

"Wait, lady!" he said, speaking in that low, wonderful tone, to which some natures are compelled to give heed. "Only hear what I have to say, and perhaps some maiden of the South will do for your soldiers what I ask of you. I want to lie here to-night forgotten. Your surgeons would no doubt find cause for taking off my foot or hand. It is done too often without doubt, on both sides. I beg to save mine. If I am left to battle with these hurts, I have both the strength and the will to outlive them. Pray let me!"

I cannot tell what the power was that the Confederate exerted over me to win me to his side. I only know that I assented to his wish, as related to my own action; that I concealed him in army blankets as well as I could; that I smuggled in to him food, prepared with my own hands, and an hour later, stole in to see how he fared. His simple "Nicely, thank you," went home to my heart. I had no motive in the deed. I did it simply

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because the man's will did not call up my own to opposition.

I dared not stay where he was, lest I be sought for and found, for I was appointed to specific offices.

At two o'clock I again went to the kitchen. Stifled groans, that amid the many, would not have reached my hearing, had I not been alert, came to me.

I carried fresh water, and asked if I might then call a surgeon.

"No, pray do not. I thought I might ease the pain by a little noise—that is all." There was something in the reticent bravery of this man that pleased me. I resolved to aid him. I verily believe that, had he been able to make his escape, and had sought my assistance, it would not, could not have been withheld. If he chose thus to battle with pain in dark silence, rather than to lose his hand or foot, why not? The man was evidently in his right mind, and entirely conscious of the risk he ran in so doing.

Could I not find some one who would be willing to sit by him, and now and then touch his lips with a cooling drink? The hospital

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nurses were not numerous, and each had the work of many to do. It was quite evident that not one of them could be spared.

As I studied the situation for relief, there grew in my mind the remembrance of the group of refugees I had seen at the camp during the day. More than any, the figure, that had covered its face with the scanty apron, presented itself to my mind. This man was from the South. From the force of habit the colored people would care for him I believed, and so sent a messenger to a trusty friend in camp.

I had not more than an hour to wait, when the boy returned, and with him came the little figure. I had directed that she should be left in the passage often referred to, and there I met her.

The light was insufficient to give me her face clearly, and, although I can now recollect being affected by it, as one is not at the face of a stranger, still it did not seem familiar. My secrecy must have surprised her, for I immediately drew her into a dark room, and told her a confederate was suffering there, and the need there was for him to remain unknown to the surgeon. "He is one of

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your climate," I said, "and I thought you would best know what to do for him."

"Very well," she replied. That voice! Most certainly I had listened to it somewhere! The darkness did not hide its tones, as it did her features.

"Who are you?" I questioned with vigor, for there was no time for going about the question, as I should have done at leisure.

"What matter is it, who?" she said, "so long as I do what you ask!"

"Very well, then," and I whispered, lest the wounded man hear the words, "Don't fall asleep, for fear the rats should get at his wounds."

"I will not sleep," she said, and with the words, the girl or woman—I had not decided which—sat down not far from the confederate. She staid beside him until the morning, for he told me so, but then she went; and although I walked to camp in search of her, she was not to be found during the ensuing day.

Susannah said, in answer to my inquiries, that she would go and do the duty the girl had escaped from. To her care, I consigned

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my confederate. Most wonderful in their effects were the cooling drinks the woman made. At evening time, when I looked in, I felt that all immediate danger was past, and it was not a difficult task to win the consent of the man to be given over to the care of the army surgeons. I sought one and told him the story of my wickedness in saving a hand or a foot, and begged him not to amputate either, even though the man's life should be sacrificed, for the sin would rest on my head.

The surgeon did not give the promise I would have exacted, but he attended the case without delay, approved the care it was receiving, and permitted the patient to occupy the room in which he had been forgotten.

It was near the morning-watch of the day following, when, in taking my way through the passage, I caught a glimpse of the girl I had been seeking.

She had, without doubt, just come from the room where Susannah presided. I went in, but the old woman declared with emphasis that "Susan" had not been heard from since the night she left the camp at my order; and the confederate assured me that

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only Susannah had attended him since the surgeon left.

Were I not a most positive being, I should have put down the vision as a case of optical delusion, but I did not. I knew that I, Harriet Lord, in the full possession of all my senses, had seen a person, resembling the girl whom Susannah called "Susan," steal along the passage, with every appearance of having emerged from the room in question. However, I concealed my opinions, and set myself to do the work of a detective. At all hours I made errands in the direction of the kitchen, and even got out a pair of slippers to aid my enterprise.

I cannot think how I could, by any possibility, have been so stupid as not to mention to the surgeon my wish to know who my confederate might be; it never came to my mind to do it, or that a simple inquiry would give me his name. At this late day I can account for it in no other way, except that I believed names would have no significance to me.

One morning I was rewarded for my watchfulness by hearing old Susannah talk to her patient.

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"Now, Massa," she said, "you know it's jest no kind o' use at all, your tryin' to git 'way. You'd be took, quicker'n wink!"

"I shall try it, Susannah, because I do not wish to be exchanged."

"Well, Massa Honor, you alluz was head-strong. You could do just as you'd a mind to with every single one on us, 'cept Miss Shawnie. Does you 'member that time when you said she shouldn't ride White Bird, and she said she was goin' to, and did?"

"I remember it, Susannah. Do you know," he went on, "that in some way it seems to me that Miss Shawnie left herself up there somewhere in the North. I haven't found her yet, though I've tried all the ways I know!"

"Shame!" almost cried the woman, with a sort of savage triumph in her voice. "*You*, to say that, Massa Honor, and she your wife these ten years!"

"I tell you she isn't the wife I wanted," he said, driven on, as it were, to confidence with this woman.

"Then, Massa, you shouldn't never sent her way up there in the Norf. You's the one to get trouble for it."

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I did not learn the reply he made, for a footstep sounded down the passage, and I was forced to go on my way. I knew then that this man was Honor St. Honor, of whose existence Shawnie Wade had told me on the night in which she came to Miss Harris's school. There could be no doubt of the fact that I was about to learn something new of my old friend. Here, fallen into my very hands, was the man she had so delighted to love.

That day the patient was removed into a hospital ward, for rumors of war had come up to us, and the place was again put into waiting for wounded and dying.

The refugees and freedmen had been sent Northward. Susannah, who seemed so willing to work and so serviceable, was retained, much to the sorrow of old Cris, who went lamenting from her, declaring that he would rather stay there, than go into the new land without his Susannah. The old man had become exceedingly childish since the disappearance of Susan. She seemed to be the bright spot in his heart, and her absence left a very great darkness.

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The wounds of Honor St. Honor healed, after the balls were extracted, with remarkable rapidity,—but the chance for escape that had been his, was cut off, by his removal to the hospital ward.

Susannah paid very little more attention to him than to the other patients, or possibly it was a plan of theirs to escape observation, for my utmost watching failed to give any additional information.

One night she was watching a patient who was ill and near to his death-hour. My own duty was scarcely a dozen feet distant, and I could readily give attention there and elsewhere.

It was one of the nights in which one's entire being seems filled with the fire of life; when humanity becomes as if phosphorescent, and eyes and ears are in connection with sight and sound, whether in air, earth or sea.

It was near two o'clock when Susannah called me by the signal known to the nurses, and which meant to them that Death was near.

I went to the cot where she had kept her watch, and found that I had been summoned

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too late; the young soldier was gone from this life. I called a surgeon, and after we had looked at the face, he was carried out so quietly that half the men in the ward knew not that a comrade had died that night.

I was called away for a brief while, but upon my return, I encountered a figure I did not recognize as one of the nurses. The woman came from the direction of the cot of Honor St. Honor. She walked so swiftly down between the rows of beds that I met her close to the entrance.

I was conscious of her wish to avoid me, and, with the flashing intelligence that played about me, I seized hold of her, as she drew near the entrance vestibule, into which I had retreated for that purpose.

"Shawnie Wade!" I said, holding her by the arm.

"Let me go!" said the woman; but I held by a firmer grasp, saying, "You know me, Harriet Lord! You have trusted me more than once! Do so now, and I promise to aid you."

How the interview would have terminated had not a sudden interruption occurred, it is

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impossible to tell. A tumult arose from the farther end of the building. Doors were hastily shut with sharp sounds; voices were heard in quick converse, and the echoes of feet moving with quickened steps came out to me.

I held fast to my captive under a vague belief that the commotion had some reference to her presence. When she found that I would not let her go—that, if she would escape, it must be through me, a change came upon her.

“You remember the night I went to that Northern school, you say?” she said.

“Yes, as if it were the event of to-day.”

“And you recollect my face as it was then?”

“Perfectly!”

She laughed, as if with preconception of the amazement that would be mine, when she should reveal her face.

A lamp burned low in the place. With the old, impetuous movement, she darted to it, upturned the wick, and threw off her bonnet, a white sunbonnet, which she held half aloft, as if thus the color of her face might be the more effectually brought into contrast.

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"You call *me* 'Shawnie Wade!' " she said. "Do you see now, that I am 'Susan,' an escaped fugitive from Col. Wade's plantation on the Mississippi?"

The girl's eyes shone on me with the same light that they had done when she had looked up from the carpet in Miss Harris's reception room with the words: "Why didn't you knock her down?" and it did not appear that she had the wish to conceal their light, or her own identity. It was as if I had suddenly gone back to that night, and the interval of school life, in which I had subsequently known her, were dropped.

And yet she stood before me wearing the dress of a slave, having the complexion of a fair mulatto. Her hands were hard and brown through exposure and much labor; her figure was slightly bent; her whole appearance had suddenly assumed the air and mien of a slave.

"Now, Missus, will you let me go?" she said.

"No!" I cried. "You are not Susan! You are Shawnie Wade, the girl that was claimed

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by Mr. Wade as his daughter, and I will *not* let you go!"

At the instant there entered the place one of the attendants.

"A patient, a confederate, has fled," he said, not pausing in his haste.

"Who is it?" I called after him, but he did not wait to give me reply.

"I know who it is, Miss Lord, and now that he is gone, what do you think I care? It is Honor St. Honor. Do you remember the night I told you about him, and how my love for him was the strongest thing in all the world to hold by?"

"Then you are Shawnie Wade?"

"Of course I am Shawnie Wade, but who do you think you could get to believe it? Not a white man or woman in the South—least of all the man, for whom I am Susan, and for whose sake I am not myself."

"Am I crazy? I, Harriet Lord, or are you, that you stand here and tell me such impossibilities—you girl with the dress of a slave, and the words of a free woman?" I asked, still holding by her dress, lest she should attempt an escape.

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“Awhile ago you said you’d help me. I have always remembered you since that night. I will tell you the story, and then you will keep your promise.” I took her to the small compartment, a kind of closet, that I called my room.

SHAWNIE'S STORY

CHAPTER III

Shawnie's Story

THE little figure seated itself on my bed, and with her eyes bent into the face of the coming day, Shawnie folded her arms and told me this story.

"My mother was from up among the high hills in Litchfield County, in Connecticut. We had been up there the day I went to New Haven, and saw you in that room of the boarding school.

"Do you remember," she asked, "how kind you were to feel sorry for me that night when you went up to the room with me?"

"Yes, I remember all about it," I replied, "and the long year that followed that night, and how queer we all thought you!"

"Harriet Lord!" she said, grasping me with a sudden energy, and holding me fast both by the hands and the eyes. "You believe there is a God, do you not?"

"I do."

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"Well, then, as sure as He exists, and you believe in Him, I never saw you from the time you went out of that room that night until you came down to the camp that time, and found me, hiding my face from you!"

"Shawnie Wade!" I exclaimed.

"Just you keep quiet, and wait till I get through, and then you will believe that what I say is true," and folding her small arms again in a kind of self-hugging way, she went on thus:

"I was an only child, and I reckon all the wickedness of the family was put into me, for father could not make me mind, or do anything with me at home.

"There was a pretty slave woman in the house. She took care of me at the same time she did her own child, and this child and I grew up, so much alike, that I know one day when there were some visitors at the house, a gentleman asked, 'Mr. Wade, which one of your children is the elder, or are they twins?'

"I could not think what should put my father into such a rage, for Susan and I had always played together, and she had even slept on the floor close by my bed. After

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that the gentleman who had made father so angry made ever so many excuses, and Susan was sent away from the house, with her mother, down to the negro quarters; but I used to steal down there every day to have one of our good old plays together, and father did not seem to care, so that she never came near the house, where company might see her.

"About this time, Honor St. Honor came, first to make us a visit, and a little later to the next plantation to live. Then we used to see him every day, and finally I came to love him the way I told you. I remember every word I said, though it is so many years ago, for I never in my life have told anybody else about it.

"One day Susan and I were down by a sugar-cane field. I knew I had no right to be there, and that if father knew it he would be very angry, but I had coaxed Susan's mother to take me, by promising that she should have Susan with her all the long afternoon. I think I went because the field was next to St. Honor's plantation.

"He came out on the road, riding his beau-

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tiful horse that day, and he looked almost handsome to me, as I half-way hid in the cane-brakes, dragging Susan after me, and trying my best to conceal her altogether, for up to that time, St. Honor had not, I thought, seen her, and I felt ashamed to have him know that my father owned a slave, who was so much like his own daughter. His keen eyes saw her, and in one minute he was from his horse to the ground. He came over the low fence, cracking his whip, and laughing in his light way. 'There! now I've caught you,' he said. 'You are trying to run away, hiding in the brakes! As I live, you, Miss Shawnie! Are you a slave, that you want to escape bondage? See here,' he said, suddenly seizing Susan by the right arm, and turning her about, so that he could look into her face, 'I want to see you two together! Change your clothing, and I doubt if your own father could tell which was his daughter.' He said the words with such cruel laughter ringing through them, that I was stung into sudden fury.

" 'I'd rather be a slave, ten thousand times,' I cried, 'than to care for you!' Then

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I looked up at Susan. Her face was white and her eyes seemed to light up, as if she was on fire, and her teeth were tight shut together. While I looked, thinking she had surely been bitten by a snake or an alligator that had slided down from the river bank, I heard her say, 'You'll live to repent your words, Sir!' She didn't say 'Massa,' as I had heard her before, but 'Sir.'

"St. Honor rode away, laughing as he went, and as his horse leaped the low fence, he flung back the words 'Tell the Colonel I'll be up this evening on business.'

"I did not stop to answer, but ran on into the brakes, not caring where I went, or what became of me. Susan followed, calling to me to come out, to stop or I would get lost. Lost! when I heard that word, I went on faster than ever. I would get lost, and I did. It was two days before we were found. Then it was, that St. Honor advised father to send me to school.

"In the fields, where we had nothing to eat but the sugar-cane, and we were tired of listening for some one to come and find us, I made Susan tell me stories, all sorts of stories,

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that the negroes had told her of white folks. Sometimes I thought she was making them up, but I didn't care for that, until she told me one about a young man who was rich and handsome, and everything, and who had a cousin that loved him, only he didn't love her any of the time, 'cause he loved a slave girl that her father owned.

"I laid that story up to think about, and the more I thought of it, the more I believed Susan had seen St. Honor before the meeting we had in the cane-field.

"I forgot to tell you that Susan's mother had gone down to a spring, where I had sent her to fetch some water, when I saw St. Honor coming, so that she knew nothing about the meeting, or what had become of us, for, when she came to the place with the water, we were gone. She stole home and waited until night for me to get back. Then, when Col. Wade came home, and with him two or three gentlemen, he did not ask for me, or miss me, until it was time for his guests to go to their rooms.

"Papa"—how the woman's voice softened as she uttered the word with loving accent

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—"used then to come into my room every night to kiss me, whether I were awake or asleep. He went in that night, and found a smooth pillow. Then the house was aroused.

"Susan's mother declared that she knew nothing about it—that I went to bed 'just as usual,' she believed. Poor thing! She knew that the truth would cause her so much suffering, that she was afraid to tell it.

"St. Honor did not go to see father that night, but father went down to his plantation and heard the story of my being with Susan in the sugar-cane field, and they two with many more went to search for us.

"When father found us, he was so happy that he forgot to scold me, and I easily won him not to whip Susan, by telling him how she had taken care of me.

"It was not long after this time that I have been telling you about, that I went down to the negro quarters one day to get Susan to help me about a thing I was trying to do. Susan was standing inside a cabin window all flushed and scarlet with vines, and outside, his arm lying along the edge of the window, and

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his hand pulling at the red leaves, stood St. Honor.

"They did not see me, and I watched them a minute or two, until it seemed to me that the window was just a looking-glass, and my own face was reflected in it; there seemed so much of the same love in Susan's, that was burning my life in my heart. O! Harriet Lord. I dare say you think that the Devil doesn't take possession of folks now, as he used to do, but I tell you he does; he whirled me up into a high place, and claimed me. I did not care. It was good to be in his service, and I never resisted the thoughts he put into my heart.

"I ran away. No one had seen me. I went home and found father busy with his overseer, but I did not care for half the world, so I went into the room—I remember I had overturned two or three chairs before I got near to father, but when I did, I cried out, '*Sell Susan!* I tell you to *sell* her now, to-day! I won't have her on the plantation another night!'

" 'Shawnie, Tornado! What storm is blowing now? What has Susan done?'

"I turned to Mr. Brown, the overseer.

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'Don't you know somebody who wants to buy the girl quick?'

" 'Yes, I do. I can sell her before night, if Col. Wade says so, to Mr. St. Honor.'

"I gave a shriek, and then a kind of red shame coming over me, I ran to the veranda, slipped through a window, and made my escape.

"The same afternoon St. Honor came around. There was to be a picnic the next week, and he came to ask permission to take me, but, mind you, I did not go, for then it was, that father consulted with St. Honor, as to what should be done with me, and St. Honor said, 'Send her to school! Two or three years at the North, will do more towards taming her, than we can in her lifetime.'

"Father did not speak for a good bit of time, but then he said, 'The advice is good. I'll take it.'

"I did not stop to hear another word, for I had so many things to think about, and my plans to lay. I did love father then. I loved him next to St. Honor, and I believed I could coax him to let me stay at home, but

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he was turned to rock. Then I turned from coaxing to make terms. If I must go to school, I would not go without Susan. I was not going to be left up there in the frigid zone without any home body to scold at, when I felt like it.

"Father laughed, and said if Susan went North, she would be free, but he had made up his mind to sell her after I asked him to.

"I made believe I was ill, went to bed, and refused to eat anything. Father rode about half the time for a week after new doctors; then told me I might take Susan North, if I would only get up and eat something.

"Eat something! There was half a feast under my pillow then, that Susan's mother had smuggled in to me. I got up and ate before his eyes. Father was happy, and we made ready.

"You know the rest, perhaps," she said, "and are tired listening.

"No, I do not. Go on.

"You know now, that I, Shawnie Wade, was introduced to Miss Harris's school as I was, and that the next morning Susan, my father's slave girl, went down to breakfast

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as his own daughter. I easily persuaded her into the plan. She had a desire to learn, was always coaxing me to teach her to read, which I did when she was only a little thing, and I told her if she kept still, and did not talk much, until she learned the language, she would do very well. More than all I warned her of the danger of saying anything about her home, for I knew she would betray everything then.

"You can never know with what keen delight I took Susan's place. I had been fond of little plays all my life, and the morning after my arrival at school, it was nothing for me to steal out, just at dawn, and go to the hotel, where I knew father and Susan were staying, for he had promised not to go without seeing me.

"I went up to Susan's room, the clerk looking at me curiously as I passed by the office, and there I made known my plan. She was to change dresses with me, and I was to go back with her to the school so that she might make no awkward mistake.

"When it was all made up between us, I went to father and made believe I was sorry for putting him to so much trouble about

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Susan, for I had found out there was no place for her in the school, so I generously offered to stay alone, and let him take the girl back with him.

"You ought to have seen Col. Wade then. He was beautiful as he caught me up and covered my face with kisses, told me what a brave, good darling I was, and made me promises of everything I wanted, if I would only try to learn, so that he could be proud of me.

"What do you suppose learning and pride meant to me? Only dust and ashes before the altar I had made, on which I meant to burn myself for Honor St. Honor, the man I thought cared more for a slave girl than for me, his white cousin.

"It was a kind of grave dressing that went on in Susan's room the next half hour. I did not shrink from her clothes, as I ought to have done, because they seemed only a rude kind of conveyance in which I was traveling back home.

"You saw Shawnie Wade the next morning. You know how well the slave girl went through her education, while I, Col. Wade's

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daughter, went down to the Mississippi plantation, as slave to its master.

"The night I reached home, Col. Wade said to me, 'Susan, you can stay at the house now, mind my rooms for me, and when I want you, you must always be ready; it seems half like having Shawnie near me, you have been so much with the girl.'"

"Of course, Mr. St. Honor, as I called him after that, came over to learn the success of the expedition, and I heard it all detailed from my lurking place.

"The gentlemen had dinner together. After that, Col. Wade fell asleep. I had put on a new dress that Shawnie had given to Susan in New York. It was not exactly suited to my position in slavery, but I knew that I looked well in it—so well that, with my slightly-darkened skin, I could readily deceive St. Honor, and I waited his coming. He picked up a book in the library, when he saw that Col. Wade had fallen asleep, and stepped through an open casement upon the piazza, where I sat sewing.

" 'Susan,' he said softly, as if afraid of waking the sleeper, 'How do you?'

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“ ‘Very well, Master St. Honor,’ I replied.

“ ‘You have put on airs since your trip to the north,’ he said, but they become you well. Tell me how you left Miss Shawnie. I want to know all about it, and the Colonel isn’t in a mood to talk the matter over. Tell me how it is that you are here, instead of staying with her.

“ ‘She sent me back—did not need me up there, where everybody knows so much that they takes care of themselves.’

“ ‘I am glad you came back, Susan. I missed you,’ he said.

“ ‘What did you miss in me?’ I questioned—for an instant taking up my identity, and gasping for the truth, even though it might kill me, body and spirit.

“For reply, and surprising me into horror, the man stooped and kissed me; then walked away, without speaking, to the most remote point on the verandah, where he seated himself and opened his book.

“What would not I, Shawnie Wade, have given for the kiss this man had bestowed upon the slave, Susan. You don’t believe me, Harriet Lord, when I tell you, that, despite

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this thing that happened, at which you will tell me that my love should have died and gone down to decent burial, I but loved St. Honor better, for after all was it not my cheek which had felt the kiss of his lips!

"I cannot tell you how swiftly passed those days and weeks and months. I liked being a slave in that household. Susannah alone knew my secret, and she devoted herself to me with ten-fold power under the knowledge that her child was safe and free.

"There came into the neighborhood a poor white family. The women in it were skilled in certain sorts of labor, which brought them often to the place, and I soon discovered that they were educated, or I thought so, and my mind began to crave knowledge. I wanted to surprise St. Honor and Col. Wade from day to day, so I spent all the time I could spare with the poor whites, learning from them whatever they could teach me.

"One day—I recollect it well—Col. Wade was away, and St. Honor had come in and said that he would wait for him. He laid himself down in the library and told me to sit by the window where he could see me work. He pretended to read, but when I saw that

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he did not, I carelessly walked across to the sofa and took the book from his hand.

“ ‘Don’t you wish, Susan,’ he said, ‘that that book could speak to you as it does to me? Shall I teach you to read? Why not, I should like to know?’ ”

“ ‘Do,’ I said, and he opened the book and began, duly instructing me in A B C. I went through his lesson with docility. He commended me and said that if diligent, I would soon be able to read for myself.

“ ‘I would rather read for you than for myself,’ I said. ‘What is the book? O, yes, I see, it is ‘Festus,’ and I opened it and read out the angel story told to Festus, of the temple built by the angels for the worship of men and angels.

“ ‘You ought to have seen St. Honor then—the look of astonishment, melting into admiration, as I went on to the end. Then I dropped the book as if it had stung me, and darted back to my chair, for, standing full in the door, was Col. Wade.

“ ‘I say, Colonel, get the girl to read for you. Where she learned is more than I can tell,’ said St. Honor.

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"I was gone when he ceased to speak.

"That same evening I was sent down to 'the quarters' on an errand, and coming up from thence, bearing a burden in my hands, I met St. Honor. It was just by an orange thicket. He made me put down my burden; then, taking both my hands in his, he kissed my forehead, saying in quick low tones, 'Susan, would to God that you were not a slave—that you could change places with my cousin Shawnie. I am going away for a long absence. Remember me until my return.'

"There was little said of his absence, but Col. Wade missed him woefully; and more and more he called upon me to amuse him. My ability to read worked wonders for me, for he caused me to read aloud by the hour from books that I should never have taken from their shelves.

"Suddenly a change came over the household. One and another of the old slaves were summoned from their quarters and we saw them no more. Once I ventured to ask Col. Wade why they went, and he told me his expenses were heavy, that it cost a large sum to educate Miss Shawnie at that North-

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ern school; besides Mr. St. Honor was not in the country, and there was no one else to give him aid. He did not want to go outside of his own family to ask for it.

"My conscience seemed to stir a bit and wake up just then, for I wrote a letter to Col. Wade's daughter and told her what was going on at the plantation, and begged her to be as careful about spending money as she could be, for there was no telling but her own mother, Susannah, might be the next to go. After that, it seemed as if she spent more than ever, the letters asking for money came so often and the sums were larger than ever too.

"I longed so to have St. Honor come home.

"He came during the time Col. Wade was gone North to fetch Miss Shawnie home. His own house was not in readiness to receive him, and he came to Col. Wade's.

"Then there came to me the happy days that I suppose everybody has sometime in life. It was all delicious, mad gladness from morning until night. I surprised St. Honor every hour with some new thing that I had learned in his absence. I read to him in the

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dim half-light of the long summer afternoons out in the orange grove. The air was odorous of what seemed Heaven to me then, and down through fruit and blossoms came bits of blue out of the sky, that made me wish to die then and there.

"You remember what I told you of my love for St. Honor the night I reached Miss Harris's school. Then I did not know that he cared for me, but now, to know, to feel every moment that this man in his inmost heart was longing to break my chains and set me free! Freedom! What did it mean for me then, more than was poured down the places of my life by every loving glance from St. Honor's eyes—by every word that parted his lips! The time was short—and then they came home.

"It was without note of warning, too, and such disappointment to Susannah, who had been in ecstasy of preparation for the young lady. Bonfires and all the accompaniments of the return were spoiled by the arrival of a carriage in the early twilight.

"Such an evening as it was, and St. Honor had said we would spend it on the river. I

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stood out bright and brave to meet Shawnie Wade, as Susan, slave on the estate.

"She had grown tall, much taller than I, in the years of her absence, and either by art or nature, she was fair in seeming. I see her now, as she alighted from the carriage that night, assisted by St. Honor, Col. Wade meanwhile giving orders about the trunks that were being taken down.

"I stepped forward, as in duty bound, to take from her hand the cloak she held, but she withdrew it with quick gesture, and I heard her say to Col. Wade, 'Is that girl on the plantation yet? It is time she was gone!'

" 'You ask me too much there, Shawnie. I could not spare Susan. She has been almost a daughter to me in your absence,' I heard Col. Wade say, and then I turned away. No one noticed me, and I moved on until I reached the orange grove, where I had been so happy. I knew St. Honor would have no time for me that night, so I lay down, and from the reaction already commenced in my system, I fell asleep. It was full moon, and scarcely an hour risen, when I went out; when I awoke, the rays fell down upon me through

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the breaks of blue from the zenith. I sprang up, and struggled on slowly to the house, thinking if I could only get into my room, Susannah would take care of me.

"It was midnight, I knew by the moon. A low half-light came from the parlor windows, and *such* music with it.

"I stopped and stood still. I clasped my hands together. I shut my eyes, and let it thrill through and through me. The music was from the hands and voice of Miss Wade. She was singing for St. Honor, at midnight, on the first night of her arrival.

"If this on the first night, what might not be hereafter?

"A fury possessed me then. My pains were hushed. I parted the vines about a window, near which they two were, and sprang into the room without any definite object, except to break up their meeting, but *she* turned around upon me, uttering a shriek that brought the household from their beds, and demanded of St. Honor that I should be taken away, where she need never put her eyes on me again.

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“ ‘She tells you lies,’ I cried. ‘That is Susan, and I am Shawnie!’

“ ‘Then I felt strong arms around me, and I was borne away by Susannah to the room, where I lay, O, so many weeks, driven by fever through all its fantastic horrors, until I was again thrown upon the shores of reason, bruised and broken, but living still.

“ ‘Susannah,’ I asked one evening, when I was in the newness of my recovery,’ has Mr. St. Honor been to see me since I lay here?’

“ ‘What made you ask, child? Massa St. Honor has gone away.’

“ ‘Gone again!’ I uttered, the room getting dark and darker, until there was only just light enough for me to hear her answer by. ‘Where?’ I asked.

“ ‘He’s gone up to de Norf somewhere, child, and you musn’t talk ‘bout it.’

“ ‘Afterward, when I had come out of the darkness and weakness, I asked, ‘Susannah, who went with him?’

“ ‘Who should go, but his own lawful wife to be sure, Miss Shawnie, that comed home so bright and gay from de school?’

“ ‘I turned away then and would speak to no

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one for two days. During that time, I was deciding what I would do in the future. At one moment I was ready to send for Col. Wade and tell him the story, but I knew—for Susannah had told me—how my crying out that night had been taken for the wandering of fever, and any words of mine then, would be thought to be delirium still; at the next moment I resolved to wait, and let the years come and go.

“An exultant cry broke from me one hour, as I saw the picture of the coming years, in my mind. My love for St. Honor went into an eclipse then, and I thought it had gone out forever, and that only hate and an avenging desire had taken its place.

MRS. ST. HONOR

CHAPTER IV

Mrs. St. Honor

“**I** GOT well with all speed. Col. Wade seemed glad to get me back again to my duties, and I took care to perform them with great exactitude; to make myself more than ever necessary to his life, in the fear that in some freak he might send me away, as I had seen so many go. The same fear made me keep *my place* with trembling, when St. Honor and his bride came back.

“They did not seem fond of visiting at Col. Wade’s. Mrs. St. Honor rarely made any but formal visits at her father’s house, and St. Honor came no more to the old places; but at home, on his old plantation, it was very gay. They had many visitors up from New Orleans, and the places about there, and go where I would, every white man and every negro was talking about the great beauty and wonderful accomplishments of Mrs. St. Honor.

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"I waited my time, still stealing every minute from my duties to study, to learn I cared little what, so it was knowledge that poured into my mind from day to day.

"Mrs. St. Honor gave out-door parties, for which she had fitted up a little temple, hung around with silken curtains, that fluttered in the wind, and into which she had her piano taken; and there like a kind of priestess of music, she entranced the people who came to listen, until they were half ready to make a musical saint of her. She had such an air of command and such power of manner and speech that every slave was ready to fall down at her bidding.

"One day Col. Wade told me he was going away to be gone a few days. It had been raining for a week, and no washing had been done, so I made up a parcel and took it myself to the poor whites, knowing that nobody on the plantation would think washing and ironing could be done in the same day. I was going back, and it was almost night—the nights come down quick in the South. There were two or three fields to cross, and in one of them I met St. Honor. He was going the short way home from Col. Wades's.

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"His head was bent down and he was whistling to himself. I thought maybe he would not see me if I went softly, and so I turned out of the path, along by a thicket, and made haste to get by.

"I think now that he was looking for me, for he came straight across to where I was, and said 'Susan, do you know what you said that night you were taken down by the fever? If I had only believed you *then*—for—Susan, I am very miserable now. No happiness in my heart, nor in my home.'

"I should have gloried in his wretchedness a moment earlier, but the tones of his voice, so pathetic, so appealing, went right down to the soft place in my heart, that I thought had been grown up more than half a year.

" 'Yes, I know what I said then. Would you believe it if I told you so now?' I asked.

" 'No, of course not, because it *could not be true*, only if I *had* believed you, it would have saved me all this misery.'

" 'Mister St. Honor,' I said, 'I am sorry for you,' and then, just then, the old fury rushed back upon me and I cried out, 'No!

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no! I am glad, glad, and more misery will come and eat out your life! It is only just begun to come upon you!

" 'Poor Susan!' he said, 'your head will never be right again, I am afraid, and you were my best friend after all! Would that the old days might come back!'

" 'What would you do then?' I questioned.

" '*Just as I did! Just as I did!*' he uttered and turned away.

"After that the years went and came. Col. Wade lost half his possessions, and the Wade and St. Honor plantations suffered greatly.

"I had begun, a good while before the war, a record of my life, beginning as far back as I could remember, putting down carefully the smallest detail of events connected with my mother, and in which my father took part, for I knew that sometime it would be necessary to prove myself to be Col. Wade's daughter.

"This transcript became a great recreation and pet performance of mine; the chief difficulty being to know where to hide it, for no place was absolutely my own. I grew to love it. The faded yellow paper on which it was

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written was bright and fair in my eyes, and every day I found some new place to deposit it. I had come at the beginning of the war, in the story up to the time when my cousin St. Honor advised my father to take me to a school in the North. One night I went out to a deep well that was seldom in use for house purposes. I knew that, not far down, there was a crevice in the stones, where my treasure would be safe for many a day; so I wrapped it up as carefully as I could, first in paper and then in a bit of oiled silk, and, as I told you, I went to the well, crawled down, and put my history safe in the place, and was coming out—my head being just above the surface of the opening—when, whom should I encounter but Col. Wade. I came near dropping back and falling down the well, so great was my astonishment and fright, but he seemed to take the affair very calmly, for he said, ‘Susan, what does this mean? Are you cleaning this old well?’

“ ‘No, Master,’ said I, ‘but you know it gets very hot in these days, and I like to go down now and then to get cool.’

“ ‘That is all, is it? Well, I advise you

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that there will be warmer days around here before April is over, and that you keep out of dangerous places, or even I cannot save you. See here, girl! I have trusted you, and now in return, do not betray me, or you may fall into harder hands than mine.'

" 'Master Wade,' I said, 'I will never betray you, never so long as I live, and my visit to the well did not mean anything that can possibly hurt you.'

"I thought he believed me, but I kept watch, and that night I saw Col. Wade, St. Honor, and two or three other men go out after midnight with lights to the well, and examine it carefully, as though firearms or ammunition might be stored in it. I trembled in fear lest my treasure should be discovered, and it was many days before I got a chance to go and learn if it was still safe.

"The times went on, as you know, worse and worse. The blacks were feared and distrusted by their masters; and they in turn were misled, and believed all sorts of impossible things about to happen to them; either they were all to be free, or else to be sold to go further South, where, they seemed to think, freedom would be a longer time in

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reaching them. The negroes no longer liked me, because I would have nothing to do with them; and Col. Wade distrusted me, because I was his slave; so that for a while no one on the plantation was so friendless and alone as I, but I endured it bravely, knowing that my hour would come.

“There did arise an insurrection in the region, and news of it reached me. I did not wait to learn the details, but went to Col. Wade and begged him to forgive some slaves, who had been consigned to severe punishment, and also to give promised freedom to two or three of his old slaves, who had long been expecting it.

“He did as I asked, and on his plantation peace was bought for the time. After it was all over, I told him the dangers he had escaped, little thinking that my information would work out my own freedom, but it did, and that before many days. I have yet to learn how it came about. All that I can tell with certainty is that not a week had passed by before Col. Wade came to me and said, ‘Susan, you are as free to come and go as my own daughter. From this hour you are no longer my slave.’

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“ ‘Why do you not thank me?’ he asked, as I stood still, not looking up, not expressing the gratitude he had a right to expect.

“ ‘Because I do not thank you,’ I said quite fearlessly, ‘I cannot!’

“ ‘Girl,’ he turned upon me savagely, rudely, for the first time in his life; he clutched my arm fiercely as he uttered the words, ‘Do you scorn freedom at my hands?’

“ ‘I can neither accept freedom at *your* hands, Col. Wade, nor as the gift of *any* man,’ I ejaculated, something within me rising up in red rebellion at the idea of emancipation. It seemed more humiliating than any lot that had fallen upon me as a voluntary slave. I suppose my eyes changed then, as I feel that they do sometimes change; it is as if other eyes were given me for the time. I know that I looked up bravely in his face, and that from his superior height he towered down upon me for a minute or two in utter silence. A certain dimness swept his vision then; he released the arm he had held in such vise-like grasp, and turned away without speaking.

“All my life long I have been tormented

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with minutes of weakness, when I am sorry for all my sins and long to get back into the region where I can kneel down and say 'Now I lay me' again, and wonder if the rustle of my mother's silk dress could be heard up in Heaven, when I laid my head on it. Such a moment came over me then, and I sprang forward to the door, toward which Col. Wade was walking. I shut it and leaned myself up against it, and said 'Father!'

"Col Wade turned white as the roses on the vine near by. He looked as if about to fall, but I went on with my impulse, and said, 'Father! do you not hear me call you! Don't you know *your own Shawnie!* Haven't you known me in all these years?'

"I held out my arms toward him. 'Father! won't you love and kiss me as you used to do before you sent me away to that wretched North? Didn't you know that your Shawnie couldn't, wouldn't stay there? Say, father, can't you see how like my mother I am?' I pleaded, pouring out my words impetuously, and before he had found time to recover himself, I asked 'Do you ask *your child* to take

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her freedom from slavery, father—the child of Shawnie Cliff?’

“ ‘Shawnie! Susan! child! slave!’ he uttered. ‘Tell me what all this sense and nonsense means! I feel as if the world had been stricken with an earthquake.’

“ ‘What it means!’ I cried. ‘Ask Susannah! No, she will not tell you the truth, for her child is Mrs. St. Honor!’ and I laughed then, a wild, mocking laugh, for all the impulse after goodness and rightness of life had passed by, and I was again driven by the gale of wickedness. I suppose the demon showed in my face then, for Col. Wade went out, locking me in the room.

“ ‘Presently he returned, and with him was Susannah, who came shivering, as if about to be sold to go South.

“ ‘Go in, Susannah,’ he said; and following her, again the door was locked and we three in the room.

“ ‘Susannah!’ said Col. Wade, ‘tell me, and tell me truly, the history of this girl from the moment you first saw her!’

“ ‘Indeed! Massa Wade, you knows the girl just well as I do! Hasn’t she alluz been brought up on the plantation?’

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"The old woman seemed ready to die from the trial into which she had been cast. She shook like one in an ague. 'Tell him,' I said, 'and mind, Susannah, tell him the truth!' but not one bit of information would the woman give. She kept repeating that Col. Wade knew all about Susan that she could tell him.

" 'Am I Susan?' I asked, a sort of recklessness taking the place of all my years of prudence and forethought; born, I think, of the fact that I had just learned, namely, that St. Honor had been compelled to join the confederate service.

" 'Who else could you be, and be Susannah's daughter, as the Massa *knows* you are?' she said. 'Indeed, Massa Wade, I knows nothing more 'bout it anyways at all—not if you sells me, I don't.'

" 'Susannah, do you ever expect to be a free woman?' he asked.

" 'If the Lord on High pleases, Sir, but I done give up runnin' 'way long time 'go.'

" 'I am very glad to hear *that*, but if you ever expect freedom in this world, tell me whether this girl is your child, or the baby I put in your arms one day and bade you guard

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with your life! Tell me truly, or you will never live to see the day of freedom.'

"She did not answer, but stood there quivering, with her teeth chattering.

" 'Father,' I said, 'don't try Susannah any more. Let her go free.' Susannah went. 'I will prove myself to you,' I said, when she was gone. 'I will give you my history, from the first moment I can remember, until the time you sent me away from you to school, and all this trouble began. You will know then—but I meant to keep the secret for a good while yet. Your Shawnie is but a sorry blunderer after all,' and I tried to get back into my old manner of speech to him, that the labor of proving myself might be less.

" 'Whoever you are' Col. Wade exclaimed, 'tell me at once, and in few words, what this mystery means, or I shall grow crazy!'

" 'It is just this, father,' I said, 'I was hurt at your sending me from home, and very angry—so angry, that it put my heart all wrong at St. Honor advising you to do it, so I planned to change places with Susan. We were so much alike, that it was not hard

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to accomplish, and Susan—she is half-white, you know, was as anxious to remain at school, as I was to return home—’

“My story was suddenly interrupted by a sharp report, as of a firearm, and a ball whizzed past my ears and struck the glass covering of an engraving hanging on the wall opposite. From that minute, the place was in a terror of confusion. Col. Wade ran out to learn what had caused the shot, and he was no sooner gone from the room by one door, than Susannah entered by another.

“I shall never forget the figure or the face that confronted me as the negro woman advanced, nor the words that seemed to run like fire from her black lips:

“ ‘Shawnie Wade!’ she said, ‘You are the daughter of Col. Wade. He is the father of Susan! Ruin her, and you ruin your own blood! Beware! Your course will end in woe, if you dare tell the story you just promised.’

“I felt prickly then, Harriet Lord, for I had never before heard the negro use the language of white folks, and for the first time in my life, I knew I was in personal danger. I trembled as if guilty, in the presence of this

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woman of Africa; but I said, 'You *know*, Susannah, it is the truth that Mrs. St. Honor has no right to the place she holds!'

" 'Let her stay in it till she dies!' she uttered, and in a moment more she was gone. Col. Wade did not make his appearance again that night.

"I hid away in my little room, and fastening the door, waited beside a window for whatever the night might bring forth. I expected every possible horrid thing to happen that ever had happened on any plantation in the country. Negroes were stealthily stepping to and fro; all the men and women belonging to Col. Wade seemed to me to be about the house. I saw black faces go up to the windows of the room the ball had penetrated and peer in, as if a death had taken place there. What surprised me more than anything was the fact that no one of the faces, as I watched, gave the faintest token of satisfaction as each looked in. I heard a clock strike out the hours until midnight, yet Col. Wade had not returned.

"It was his habit to absent himself without word of explanation, therefore at any other

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time I should have given little anxiety to the fact; but on that night I became nervous and irritable, so that a slight movement outside my door made me start nervously and cry out, 'Who is there?'

" 'It's only me! Let me in, and I'll give you some thin' good and warm,' was the reply in the voice of Susannah. I was minded to refuse her admittance, but old habits are strong, and I had been so used to the services of this woman, given much in secret for years, that after a time I opened the door.

" 'I knew ye was watchin,' she said, 'but if ye'll be good to my Susan, I'll be just as good to ye as an angel, long's I last. Now promise me, won't ye?' she begged, dropping down on her knees with an adroit motion, and holding out to me, with both hands, a tempting little repast she had come to feast my appetite with.

" 'What do you care for Susan?' I asked. 'Would she acknowledge you for her mother, do you think? Does she give you anything out of her wealth, to make you comfortable?'

" 'Never mind, honey, what does old Susannah care for them foolish things, but she

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never could forget to remember that Misses St. Honor is Col. Wade's own chile, too; and now I'll jes tell you a thing 'bout that gun, 'while back. I's so feared ye'd go tell dat whole story 'bout the schoolin' and all, dat I jes let it go off to scare a bit, never meanin' to do the least mite o' harm to nobody.'

"You did!" I exclaimed, rising up from the window, 'Then all the trouble this night is just because of *you*! What do you suppose will be punishment enough for you this time?'

"'Go tell, if you dare,' she cried, springing up from the position she had taken on her knees, and assuming again the manner of a dark priestess at some avenging altar, the woman poured forth a torrent of words that were only half intelligible to me, but still I gleaned from them that some fearful work was about to be executed in the region, and that it could be prevented by my giving my word of promise not to betray Mrs. St. Honor, or to assert myself as Col. Wade's daughter.

"When Susannah had exhausted herself, she asked, 'Will you promise and save all

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dem good folks, or will you look on at de fires and de killin' ?'

"During her talk I had been gradually nearing the door by which I had let the woman in, so that when she summed the matter in the final question, I was close beside it. I have always been remarkably swift in my movements, I believe, and before there was time enough for my answer to be spoken, I had withdrawn the key, shut Susannah into the room, and locked the door from the outside. Then I ran down. The house was dark and still. Outside, a band of negroes seemed to be keeping a kind of watch about the place. I went up to them quite fearlessly.

" 'Is Col. Wade come home ?' I questioned, and received the news I already knew regarding him. I sent for the overseer, who was acting physician on the premises, to come up at once to Susannah, telling the blacks that she had fallen into a fit. I omitted to mention that it was a fit of rage, my object being to gain a little time. They were no sooner gone—they went together in a band, as if afraid to separate—than I took my way toward the open road, darting behind shrub or bush at

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the slightest sound, as if I were guilty of some crime that feared detection.

A PRISONER

CHAPTER V

A Prisoner

“THE nearest town was M——, ten miles distant. St. Honor’s plantation lay in my way, but I did not turn to it, for he, I knew, was not there, and I had no mind to save Mrs. St. Honor, even had she been in danger, which I knew she was not.

“I was strong, vigorous and armed with resolution, and although the road was in a terrible state from recent rains, I reached M—— before the day dawned.

“I was pretty well known, even in M——, as Col. Wade’s learned slave, therefore I found no difficulty in gaining a hearing for what I had to say.

“There were so many stories afloat, the air was so filled with rumors, that the real and the purely imaginary became thoroughly mingled in those days, and mine was listened to with careful examination.

“It all went well until the story was told, and the question put to me regarding my

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motive in telling this thing, which would have resulted so well for my people.

“ ‘What had I to do with staying it?’ I was asked, and to the question I was able to give no satisfactory answer. To say that ‘Col. Wade had always been so kind to me,’ was not enough to account for my betrayal of my race—hence, when I had told my story and was ready to leave, I found myself a prisoner; held, I suppose, as a sort of evidence against myself.

“Day after day passed, and yet I was not put at liberty. What gave me more surprise than any other thing was the fact that no inquiry seemed to be made for me by Col. Wade; and although I asked questions every time my silence was broken by living creature, I gained no atom of information concerning the revolt or the world.

“I cannot express to you the loneliness of those days without employment, shut up in a small room with little light. With my full health and restless nature I rebelled against it, but to no purpose. The only reply that came to my petition for liberty was that I ought to be thankful for safety.

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"I had a pretty bit of jewelry that I had always kept about me—I scarcely had a motive other than habit in doing so, although it was my mother's ere it was mine. With this trinket, I obtained, after a month's imprisonment, writing paper, a pencil, and some books from a vain little girl, my jailer's daughter, who fancied the pin. One who has not counted the hours go by, each one as aimless as the last, cannot comprehend the gladness with which I seized hold on something to do.

"My first work was to write out to the minutest detail the part of my story relating to my trip North. If ever you should see it, Harriet Lord, you will find a description of yourself, even to the dress you wore, and the ribbon at your throat; for, in that prison life, it seemed as if all the past grew again as I wandered into it, and I could paint it just as it was.

"They gave me food to eat and raiment to wear in the prison, but the clothes brought to me were not from my supply at Col. Wade's.

"At last the day came when I was told to go forth. I thought I was at liberty; so, care-

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fully concealing my precious history, I started, eager to walk once more a distance greater than my few feet of space had permitted.

"I was taken into a court room, and sooner than my eyes could contract to meet the full light of day, they encountered the African woman, Susannah.

"There was a crowd of eager, anxious, white faces, and there were a few blacks, looking as if the time of their happiness was forever gone. There was a judge, and a jury, and lawyers in abundance.

"I had little time to wonder what had caused my appearance there, for I was immediately summoned to give testimony regarding a fearful insurrection that had taken place on Col. Wade's and others' plantations. I looked about the court room for Col. Wade, but he was not there. I was told to stand up and hold up my right hand, which I did readily enough, but, when bidden to promise to tell all I knew about the matter, I put it down, refusing to tell anything.

"Poor old Susannah! She looked so utterly miserable; and when I refused, her face lit up so that my heart turned towards her.

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Just then, while the mood was on me, I would have gone any length to serve the woman, who all her life long had been doing me thousands of little services in secret. Not a burden had I borne, that this dusky woman had not stolen up to me afterward to wash the dust from off my feet. Every hour since Susan went North had given in its evidence for her unselfish kindness to me; then how could I stand up before these persons, and speak words which would condemn her to death, while I knew in my own mind that she would not hurt a fly, except to save her own daughter.

"She had heard of this insurrection and promised to stay it, if I would pledge myself to keep silence. I had run away and given information, at the same time carefully concealing my motive in doing so; but now, after this long silence, Col. Wade had shown no desire to learn the truth of what I had told him that night. He had not even sent to me in prison, and my heart turned bitter in me toward him, and tender toward his slave, Susannah.

"I was commanded to tell what I knew,

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but I opened not my mouth. I was taken out of the witness box, and talked to in private by the lawyers, was promised safety and all sorts of protection if I would only tell what I knew.

“At last I said I would not open my mouth against any man, white or black, not if they killed me. This I said as a witness, and a voice in the room cried out, ‘As I live that was Col. Wade speaking then!’

“‘You mistake!’ I said, ‘it was Col. Wade’s daughter!’

“At that a great shout of derision filled the court-room, in the midst of which Susannah’s shriek was almost drowned, but it came up to my ears, and filled them with secret accusation. I repeated my words instantly, but I needed not to do it, for no one believed them. They passed like water down sands, and—I was returned to the jail.

“My second going into it was pleasanter than the first; for, absurd as it may seem to you, I felt a little of the glory of the martyr on my head, and it served to light the darkness of my cell for nearly an hour. After that came my enemy, lashing me up to all the

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wicked, furious thoughts that haunt me so at times, and drive me into jungles of temper, such as good, quiet folks like *you* know nothing about.

THE SEARCH FOR ST. HONOR

CHAPTER VI

The Search for St. Honor

“**T**HE days passed on, and yet no one came to me. Why did not Col. Wade look after me, for I was surely his property in some sense of the word? Why did not St. Honor come to make inquiry? were questions I asked often, but they were never answered.

“One day I heard a great medley of sounds; cannon, bells, cries; and then, after a few hours, my prison door opened, and I found myself free. ‘Go!’ cried the man who opened it, ‘You are free, woman!’

“‘Who freed me?’ I asked, dazed by the sudden change.

“‘The Yankees have taken the town,’ he said. I got up and went with little ceremony, but I did not get far before I was arrested and inquiries made concerning my errand. I really had none at the minute, but emergencies are sometimes nature’s great opportunities, and one flashed into my mind. Where ought I to go but to my old home; so I said

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I was going to Col. Wade's plantation; and was permitted to take my way out from the town.

"The walk was long—ten miles—after several month's confinement from exercise, and it was deep into night when I reached the place. A dark, gloomy night it was; the air full of storm-quivers that made me quake as I drew near. Added to this came the barking of the dogs.

"I had not thought of them until I was near the house. The old dogs would know me, but what new ferocities might not have been added to the number since I went? I dared not run, for that, I knew, would bring certain death upon me. I stood still one moment, and as I think of it now, it seems as if I then called out to God to help me. Down they came, their wild, howling cries breaking the night into a chorus of horrors.

"I was in the midst of the shrubbery. Governed half by instinct and half by deadly fear, I fell to the ground, covering my face with my hands; a vague feeling that it would be so dreadful to have St. Honor see me with my

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face torn—I believe it was that made me do it.

“Just as I fell, I gasped out ‘Thros! Thros!’ Thros was the most ferocious dog on the premises when I left the estate, and in secret I had made a friend of him.

“St. Honor was Thros’s master, although the dog was owned by Col. Wade. It was for the love he bore to St. Honor that I petted him, liking to stroke his head just where St. Honor had caressed him; liking to put my hand under the dog’s chin, and make him lift his great, solemn, fierce eyes to mine, that I might find in them the look of love I had witnessed poured into them from those other eyes, that could not give me caress or look, except through the agency of a dog.

“I see you don’t laugh at me, Harriet Lord,” she said, “and you need not, for we women are very much alike, after all, just so soon as the scarf-skin of circumstance is removed; and you know, in your own soul, that I could not unlove this man.”

“About the dogs!” I gasped, not caring to discuss the question just then, though differing widely in opinion.

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"The dogs came down on me. I felt the leap, the hot breath; then after a moment in which I think I died, so dead was the time to me and so dead is it to me in the nonrecollection, I felt the lap of a great tongue on my hands, and the air was full of low mutterings, as the pack was kept at bay.

" 'Thros! dear Thros!' I murmured, and the faithful creature made a noise, a sound that certainly was speech. It seemed to say 'It is all right, dogs! Go about your own business now, and I'll attend to this;' for off the dogs trotted. No more howling, no more noise. Still Thros stood over me. When the others were gone, I dared to move, and the motion was met by a little low croon of delight that was the happiest sound that ever I had heard.

"I got up.. We drew near the house. I feared no longer, for I was under guard. Lights were moving from window to window. I heard certain doors as they were opened and shut. Then I was at the entrance, Thros going steadily before and striking with his paws on the panel, a trick St. Honor had taught him.

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"I waited, knowing that in a few seconds I should gain entrance. The door was unbarred, and stood open before me. The light streamed out, and showed my face and figure to the stranger standing within the doorway.

" 'Is Col. Wade at home?' I questioned.

" 'Col. Wade at home!' he repeated. 'Who are you?'

"Then, if ever, my blood must have asserted itself, for I verily believe that every globule of it stood out round and clear, and jangled in my veins. I burst past the man into the old, wide hall where I had walked my first steps, asserting myself as Col. Wade's daughter.

"The man spoke civilly then. 'Where can you have been not to know what every child knows in the region?'

" 'Where is Col. Wade? I want to go to him,' I questioned, impatient at his delay.

" 'I do not know where he is, Miss Wade. This property is in the care of strangers. Will you be seated?'

" 'Where are the people? I want to see Susannah, or someone belonging here,' I said.

"The man told me that they were gone, all gone. Not one of the old souls left about

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the premises. I stood there another minute, half in horror and half in stupor. I was hungry—hungry as the free air and long walk could make me. I espied through an open door a table spread with what to me seemed luxuries—I had lived so long on prison fare.

“ ‘Will you give me something to eat,’ I was forced to ask, for I felt that hunger was just then getting stronger than indignation or family pride. I am compelled to tell you that the man was civil; that he bade me take what I would. A loaf of white bread was in sight. I slipped by him, seized the whole loaf and then went out, followed by Thros.

“In five minutes I had passed from the Wade estate. If Col. Wade was gone, I fancied that the household of St. Honor also was broken up. A half-hour brought me to the plantation, and the sun so near the horizon that I could see to walk by the light of the coming day. My loaf was half-consumed, I having broken it with my hands, and shared the crumbs with grand old Thros, who had followed me.

“There was nothing in motion about the St. Honor homestead. It looked as though

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one might lie down there and sleep undisturbed for a thousand years. Such a vision of rest and quiet I had never witnessed. I watched the sun come up and throw all his gold down over it, but never sound of living thing—here, there nor anywhere.

“Thros would not leave my side, except to go near the doors and smell; then to run back and shake his head and lift his old, mournful, fierce eyes to my face, asking me why I sat there—a question that I asked myself soon after, for I began to fall under the spell of sleep. Presently, ere my eyes were quite closed, Thros gave a signal of victory. He had found a trail, and was pursuing it.

“Thros was my only friend then; the only living link that I knew, binding me to my past life, and I could not afford to let him slip, so I followed on, having first knocked at each house-entrance, and gotten for my pains only echoes.

“I called, but Thros did not come. I had seen him go past the negro quarters, so I felt that it was of no use for me to pause there. On I went in the direction the dog had taken when he first caught the trail. A fragment

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of forest lay on the plantation; tall old giants, that St. Honor used to tell me were his best friends, loomed in the form of trees, over a few acres of the estate. Into their gloom I fancied Thros had gone. I was right, for there I met the creature coming toward me, head lowered, eyes beseeching, and tail lying on the ground as he came.

"I believed the dog was coaxing me not to punish him, but no such contemptible emotion had lowered his bearing, as was soon evident, for as I gave him a call he came to me, but refused to go on.

" 'Come, Thros.' I said, 'we will go and find what all this means. Somebody must know something.' It was such a good thing to have a dog even to speak to.

"Thros would not follow. After repeated attempts, I went back to him and said 'Poor Thros! tell me which way to go!' You see how poor I was in resources to ask counsel of a dog, but he looked so sadly-wise that I could not help it.

"He turned and started again for the forest. I followed him, half fearing, half glad of any guidance. From tree to tree he took his way to the deepest part of the glade,

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looking back continually to see if I were following him.

"The way became tangled by undergrowth; the place had been seldom penetrated, but I passed on. I had not far to go, for suddenly I found myself in the smallest of clearings, so small that there was scarce room enough for one to lie down in. On it Thros had stopped.

"As I reached it, the dog lifted up his voice and uttered the most pitiful wailing. I pushed him aside and knelt down to examine a small board. It was but a shingle that lay on the little clearing. Upon it were characters, that a moment's notice gave me the meaning of. Mrs. St. Honor was dead. This was her grave and that of her child.

"The faithful blacks had hidden it, and marked the place with a rude inscription written with charcoal. The words were 'Missis St. Honor and the baby: dun nobody tuch.'

"I read them a dozen times aloud to Thros and the angels, if any were there; then I arose and shouted as though all the birds of all the forest had gone mad with merriment.

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I believe I was mad then. I knelt down and kissed the old brown soil that covered her, but the shingle I dared not touch. The words were as potent as the curse the Playmaster protects his grave with.

"The story they told to me was plain enough. I needed to know nothing more. Mrs. St. Honor was dead! Safely dead! and not by any act or connivance of mine.

"Why, Harriet Lord," said she, clutching my arm until I was forced to cringe under the pain of it, "I never knew, until that moment, that a thought of murder toward the woman who had taken my lot out of life, had ever been in my mind; but that flash let on such a flood of light that I saw what I might have done; and gratitude is, I believe, what they call the feeling that came in and took possession of me.

"Thros and I raced out of the woods like two merry children; he bounding with delight, and I singing in my joy, as though the silver sounds of Mrs. St. Honor's voice had fallen upon mine from the great white clouds over my head.

"We went back past the negro quarters

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and the house, because that way led to the highway. I stopped and looked the house over. Once I thought I heard a sound from it. I was passing on when the sound repeated itself.

"A little white flutter at a window high up under the point where the two sides of the roof met, made me keep watch for a moment, and then the flutter was gone, and in its place appeared a black face. It gave sign that I was to go to the rear.

"I went and waited at the door. A voice—Susannah's—whispered 'Go down cellar, chile, and I'll let ye up.'

"Down cellar I went and was admitted. I cannot begin to tell you how that black woman and I kissed each other; out of pure excitement at first, and then out of pure affection, for our lives had been entwined from the beginning.

"I asked her why she had let me in, in such a queer way, and for answer she said, 'Ye see, chile, dis yer now is haunted house. Miss St. Honor, she dies, all 'lone—nobody but the folks here wid her, and den after dat dey all clairs right out—couldn't but jest git

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Uncle Jake to write a bit on de shingle, for fear de place 'ud git lost, down dare in de big woods. Den, when dey'd all gone, I jest sat here a waitin'. I knowd somebody 'ud come long dat 'ud want Susannah, so I jes haunts Masse St. Honor's house, ups and downs, day out and night in, till I specs now none of 'em dare come nigh it.'

"Then Susannah fell on my neck in a great burst of weeping, and her honest heart poured its love about me. 'Now my own child is gone,' she said, 'f'rever and f'rever, Ise nuffin to love but you.'

"Susannah took Thros and me to her haunt in the garret and treated us to all the goodies that she had stored up for herself. There I told to the woman my story, and got from her all the news that I could glean. She had not seen Col. Wade since the night of my departure from the house.

"St. Honor had gone to the war in the same week. Of him she could tell me no more. She had left the Wade plantation—there being no one to hinder—and had staid by Mrs. St. Honor to the hour of her death. When she told me about that event, she ex-

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claimed 'It was good pay, pay enough to hear her calling me 'mother' at the very last, when all the big world was gone—clair away from the room she was dyin' in.'

"After rest and refreshment, I was impatient to be gone. Susannah would not let me go alone. She wanted me to array myself in the fine apparel of Mrs. St. Honor. To her it was gold and fine linen; to me it was the very garb of a slave. I would not put it on. All at once it came into my mind that I must prove myself to be Shawnie Wade, at some time.

"To achieve that end, I wanted my parcel out of the old well on the Wade plantation. Night and secrecy were needful to gain it. I readily won Susannah to my plan. I said that I could not go away until I had made a visit to my old home. I wanted to walk again over the familiar ground. I think she had a similar feeling, for she assented to my proposal to wait until evening and then go.

"With Thros for our attendant, we set forth at the hour when we thought every one would be asleep. As we went I remember Susannah asked 'Where are vou going?' and that I answered, 'Into the world.'

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"That night, I crept down into the old well, and found my treasure *gone*.

" 'Pears to me,' said Susannah, as I came up—I thought I had eluded her vigilance for the time—'Some folks is mighty fond uv old wells! Now 'strue's I live, the very las' time Massr Honor was to the old place, I seen him with my own eyes comin' up out uv this very well, with a yellar bundle too!' "

"She had unconsciously explained the mystery to me.

" 'And what did he say after that?' I asked her.

" 'Why he never said nothin' the next day to nobody, but goes right off, and said nobody needn't never spect to see him come back alive, and Misses Honor, she say he never got a wink o' sleep, but sat up all night a readin' suthin, the night afore he went.'

"I knew that it must have been my history that he had read. Had its truth reached his heart, I wondered, as I went forth, determined to see him, if he were yet alive. Do you think that I cared for armies or wars? They seemed childish trifles beside my individual enterprise.

"I determined to retain my position as a

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slave, and we soon joined the little band that was pressing Northward. Poor old Chris!" said Shawnie, and for an instant seemed to forget her story.

She did not seem to hear my question regarding her father. She was listening, as at the call of some unseen visitant. She smiled suddenly, saying. "The St. Honor mansion is not haunted now; it never will be again!"

She started from the place where she had been sitting, and exclaimed, "I hear! I hear Thros! He is telling *me* that he has found him! Let me go!" she cried, for I had seized her, anxious to know more; longing to help her if I could.

She pulled from me with sudden effort, and was gone before I had time to think what I ought to do. I did not even make an attempt to follow the figure, as it sped away toward the camp, followed by Thros.

A week later, our camp was a hundred miles away. Our hands were heavy with toil, and our hearts so torn with the sorrows of a great defeat, that Shawnie Wade's trouble fell from my thoughts.

* * * * *

WHO IS SHAWNIE WADE?

CHAPTER VII

Who is Shawnie Wade?

IN the hill-country of Massachusetts, I, Harriet Lord, teach school to-day. My life, so full of grave prose, heavy and dull to the souls about, is yet, to me, the sweetest life in all the earth.

It was set astir to-night by a bit a bright-eyed boy brought up from the post office in the village below. A small envelope—a few words—yet they have set my heart athrill with delicious emotions. The note is re-written here.

“Harriet Lord:—

Do you remember Shawnie Wade? She is dead, with all her old meanness, misery and wretched pretences. In her name, I bid you to visit *me*. Come soon. Come to stay. Say when, and you shall be met at New Orleans by
SHAWNIE ST. HONOR.”

How well I remember the faded story

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written above. I wrote it out and sent it off with anxiety, hoping some publisher would accept it, and that from its sale, I should gain the money necessary to make the trip, towards which I looked with keen enthusiasm.

How curiously the letters, received in reply to the manuscript, look to-day. I am tempted to insert two or three—but resist the temptation.

From an unexpected source money came to me, and I went to New Orleans. The interest, the anxiety, the fore-feel of that meeting with Shawnie St. Honor can never be forgotten.

I kept asking myself “How will she look? In what guise will she come to me for the third time?”

For answer, no sooner had I arrived at the place of meeting, than there came the swift rushing of a little figure, a sudden clasp of her powerful little arms, and a rapid enunciation of the words, “Now, Harriet Lord, you see me myself! No, I mean you will help me to be; for do you know the wise men of Orleans are trying me, to know whether I was, or am the veritable maid, or not?”

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"Dear me! if they should burn me as a witch or a heretic, I should wish I had not been proved!"

Then the arms unclasped themselves, and Honor St. Honor gave me welcome.

"Only to think, Miss Lord," he said, "what might have been, had you not helped me that night. I might have crossed this platform to meet you on crutches, if at all."

"Oh! don't," I pleaded. "Don't bring up the pictures of that time! I keep them for dark nights when the winds blow and the clouds shudder."

"We never have such times down here," said Shawnie, "we have nothing worse to fear than that the Mississippi will cover our breakfast table some fine morning."

"The Father of Waters has great respect for Yankees," said Mr. St. Honor. "Come!"

We went, but instead of being whirled away through miles of country as I expected, we were driven to the St. Charles hotel.

"You are not going home, to-night?" I questioned Shawnie, as we arrived.

"Oh, no! And not for a week perhaps. It is just as I told you. I am on trial and I want you for a witness."

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"On trial for what?" I asked, having failed to get the import of her first words at our meeting.

"To find out who I am. Col. Wade's heirs are after his money. Do *you* know, Harriet Lord?" she exclaimed, "For sometimes I begin to doubt. As I have sat in court, and heard dozens of persons, sane and righteous without doubt, testify that my name is Susan Carr; and that it is not, or was not rather, Shawnie Wade, a curious emotion has crept through me. I can't explain it, and Honor will not let me try. I wish he would, for if once tracked out, it might explain itself.

"Can you imagine that you are two persons? I mean that you have two separate lives? Here you are, all day Harriet Lord. At night you lay yourself down, Harriet Lord still, but who are you until you wake up again?

"That other life that you live sleeping? The things that you do in it; the efforts that you make; the sense that sometimes your feelings feel very bad then. You know all that, don't you?"

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I assented, wondering what the quaint little woman would say next.

"Well then, that sensation of double existence comes near to what I feel. You know I've lived Shawnie, and I've lived Susan, and dearest and best of all, Harriet Lord, I am living Shawnie again; so you cannot wonder that a haze comes over me sometimes. It does not last—it only comes and I am in a fog. So I want you to stand and toll away while in court, like a true fog signal, and presently the fog will lift and I shall know just where I am."

"Dear child! Let me kiss you again, as I did on the night I saw you first," I said, "only I don't think you'll pity me nearly so much now as you did then!" and I kissed the brown cheek two or three times.

"I do pity you a thousand times as much as I did—a thousand million billionaries more! Why, just think what you miss in not having Honor!"

She laughed then, a little, quick tremor of laughter, before I had time to say anything, and exclaimed, "No, I do not mean in not having my husband! I only just wish that

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you had the same kind of love put into somebody else for you."

"And so do I, if it is true," exclaimed Mr. St. Honor at the door.

Then we three sat down to ask and answer questions till it should be time to go to dinner.

The following morning I was summoned to give testimony in the great case. It does not appear on the records of the court under the names I here use.

I testified most emphatically that the present Mrs. St. Honor was the Shawnie Wade that Col. Wade introduced into Miss Harris's school as his daughter; and I gave a detailed statement of the girl who remained during that year as Shawnie. Then came the story told to me by Shawnie herself in the second year of the war, long before there was a rod of land dependent upon her identity; and either my Yankee straightforwardness or some other influence worked well for the case.

For the first time, a perplexed look came into the faces of the men in power. Evidently the strange recital had moved them to wonder, although the motive was wanting that could have induced Col. Wade's only daughter to personate a slave.

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The last question asked by the opposing counsel; the last answer given; and we went home to the old plantation, that I had so often pictured in my imagination.

Shawnie's feet were the first to touch the wide veranda. "Come!" she cried, "these are the steps; this is the veranda; yonder is the door; and—here we are—in the very hall, out of which I once ran starving, with a big loaf in my hand—and—and—and," but the words were drowned, smothered, extinguished somewhere in the folds or arms of a fat black woman, who met Shawnie at that moment. When the little head came to the surface again, the sentence went on "and— here is Susannah!"

"Don't! don't child!" said Mr. St. Honor, "it isn't becoming to behave so!"

"Do you want me to be becoming, Sir? Would you like me prim and proper? Do you always wish to know exactly what I am going to do before I act, and say before I speak? Couldn't tell you, Sir, until I know myself! Couldn't possibly! Didn't know I was—going to kiss you—until I did it! There!"

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Mr. St. Honor lifted himself up from Shawnie's caress, and the light that came from his deep eyes rested lovingly on the little figure, in an instant half-way up the wide old stair-case.

Shawnie had summoned me to follow her, and I was on the stairs, when she suddenly turned and ran down again.

"Suppose, Honor," she cried, "just suppose for a minute that they prove that I never was Shawnie Wade; and then, that years and years after, for no one knows that papa is dead, he should come back and the old place be gone—strangers here—and a big, new house with no old love in its beams, and no memories in its clapboards—standing in its place. But then," she added softly, "papa didn't believe me that last night, and maybe he wouldn't now! Oh! it is dreadful, too dreadful! to get mixed up in such a wrong and a lie! *Where* did it all begin, and shall we *ever* get out of it?"

Shawnie was crying on her husband's shoulder. He picked her up in his arms and carried her up the stairway out of sight.

"Don't, darling," I heard him say. "Great

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wrongs will come right *sometime*, if we try our best to overcome them with good."

Susannah appeared and conducted me to my room. "I's right glad you've come," she said, "for Miss Shawnie's gittin' too much trouble now. I jes wish Messr Wade hadn't gone done died, I do."

"But tell me, Susannah, I don't know yet about it."

"Nor don't we! Folks says he was on dat air vessel dat went down in the ocean, tryin' to get away, an dat's all!"

As Susannah finished the sentence, she shut the door, and I was left in one of the quiet chambers of the old Wade mansion.

I had not long to stay alone however, for Shawnie entered, a grieved look on her queer face.

"You mustn't mind my going down into tears so suddenly! I couldn't help it, indeed I couldn't," she said. "It was this thought that made me cry, and it's *just awful!* Suppose they should prove that I am Susan Carr—a court of law, you know, establish that point—and who is it that Honor St.Honor married? There is no such marriage on rec-

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ord as that of Susan Carr with him; and then, maybe, they will try to prove that I am not his wife after all!"

Shawnie had left the door ajar, and had spoken with her usual carelessness of effect, so that Mr. St. Honor had heard her last words.

A merry laugh came breezily into the room from without, followed by the question, "May I come in?"

"Yes, listener!" said Shawnie.

He entered, and said, "Mrs. Shawnie, do not let such idle thoughts into your mind to distract it. In the first place you are not 'proved' yet, and even if you were, all that might be necessary would be a change of name, or at most, a repetition of the marriage ceremony. Beside, with all the witnesses on the other side to prove your father's death, I cannot feel *convinced* that there is not some fraud."

"Wouldn't it be *delicious* to lead him into court though, alive and well!" exclaimed Shawnie, with all the old gleam in her eyes, and sparkle in her tones. "Wouldn't the case be decided quick!"

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Time stole by, leaving a sweet consciousness of happy moments, until the next session of the court. Then we went down to New Orleans, to see, as we trusted, the last of the troublesome case.

The arguments on either side were long and able. The weight of evidence was on that of the plaintiff; but I could see that the sympathies of all, or nearly all, were with Shawnie.

A great and solemn hush fell on those in the court-room when the verdict was given. It was against my little friend. Never shall I forget how the hand of Shawnie clenched mine, nor the look of untold agony that covered her sweet face as she looked up into the face of St. Honor.

It was not for house, nor lands, nor home, nor love that that look pleaded.

The journey back to the old plantation was dismal as journey could be; rain fell and the wind blew. For the first time, Shawnie, or Susan—as the court had named this woman—refused St. Honor's care and comforting. She turned her head away from him, and rested it on me for hours, as we passed onward.

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We drew near home. "We are almost there," said St. Honor. Shawnie gathered herself up out of the corner of the carriage, and just as she did so, a light gleamed suddenly up from the road-side, and shone on her face.

"They do not know the verdict, or they would not light my way back," she said; and then, turning to me, she asked, "Did you know that I invited you to my marriage, when I sent up to Massachusetts for you? Wedding, I shall not have"—then, with one of the transitions of which her nature seemed full, she turned to St. Honor, saying, "But, Saintie, won't you be a big—something with two wives? You married Shawnie Wade in one year, and before the year is done, you marry Susan! What a mist it is, all around! I wish something would happen to wake us all up out of this horrid dream, don't you?"

"Something *has* happened," said Mr. St. Honor. "Look at the house, Shawnie! Look, Miss Lord! Is it burning, or what is it?"

The place was blazing with light. Shawnie screamed,—she shouted—she would have

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leaped out of the carriage had we not held her fast.

Susannah stood out to meet us. "I know it! I know it! cried Shawnie. *I know papa is come!* Where is he?"

"Here I am, my child! my Shawnie!" and I saw Col. Wade catch his daughter up to his great heart, precisely as I had seen him take that other Shawnie, at Miss Harris's school. After a while he let her go, and gave to St. Honor and to me a greeting.

"I have heard it all—the whole story—and whatever the verdict is, it will be no verdict, for there can be no case now," said Col. Wade.

"Maybe they will try to *prove* you, papa, the times are very queer. Is it really and truly you? Why didn't you come and get me out of that horrid jail? *I thought* you would!"

For answer, Col. Wade wiped his face two or three times, despite which I saw the tears trickling down his cheeks.

It was many days ere we learned much of the story of his disappearance. He could not account for himself for weeks and months,

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during which time, it was believed, that he had wandered far—being driven by trouble, the war, Shawnie's story, and the threatened insurrection among his own people, into a condition of insanity. He was found, in the garb of a begger, in a foreign city, and returned to his own land, where, upon his arrival, he became unable to identify himself, and was sent to an institution for the insane, from whence he had now come forth recovered.

It was a curious story, from which many chapters were missing, and the thread of which it was almost impossible to track through the few years of his absence.

One thing was certain. He was alive, and at home again.

A happier household than that in the old homestead of the Wades that night could not have been found in all the land.

"Oh! Harriet Lord!" said Shawnie, stealing into my room at midnight, "Harriet, I am going to say 'Now I lay me' to-night *with all my heart*. I never have *quite* before. If I do, do you believe God will ever get us out of this sin? *I'm so tired of it!*"

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I comforted her with what comfort I might, and she went. In the hall, I heard Susannah speaking to her. The only words that came in to me were from the woman. They were these: "Miss Shawnie, honey! You's *sure* you forgive me afore I go?"

In the morning, Susannah was found dead. Shawnie wept over her until we were compelled to take her away. Col. Wade stood a long time looking at the still face of the woman who had once been his slave; then turned and walked away. Hours afterward he came up from that lonely grave in the forest of the old St. Honor place.

Shawnie knew where he had been. She came to me, urging, "Go, dear! go to him! go to papa. You won't remind him of anything in the past. I am afraid he might get crazy again, and then what would become of us all?"

I went down to meet Col. Wade and walked back with him to the house. As we reached the veranda, the moon came out from a cloud that had obscured its rising. It was a moon at its full.

"How scarred it looks to-night. They tell

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us," he said, "that the scars are the craters of old volcanoes that are dead—burned out. Do you think, Miss Lord, that *any* sin ever dies? that it will ever burn out? or if it should, must we wear the rugged scars forever?"

He seemed so much older and wiser and richer in experience than I, that I knew not with what words to answer him.

Shawnie spent that night watching the still, black face of Susannah, and I staid beside her.

The next day, a solemn little procession moved out from the house of Col. Wade, and took its way to the dim recess where St. Honor's first wife had burial. The clearing had been enlarged, and in it a grave had been made for Susannah.

* * * * *

"I cannot let you go now, Harriet Lord—now when we are just beginning to be happy," Shawnie said to me a few weeks later, when I began to think it time that I returned myself to the children, who had already had a long vacation.

I staid. One morning, a few months from that time, I went in to see Shawnie.

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"I used to think," said she, "in the old days, that I knew what love meant, but it was only last night that the Angel of Life taught me its meaning. *Look there!*"

In his arms Col. Wade was holding his grandson. It was difficult to tell which looked the happiest—Col. Wade, St. Honor, or Shawnie. It certainly was not the baby, for it made the most dismal faces at the world into which it had come.

"Only to think what might have been," said Shawnie, "if that wretched law-suit had gone on."

"Only to think what may be," said I. "Who can tell me that I shall not, some day, teach that boy in a Massachusetts school?"

What came of it all, I, Harriet Lord, daughter of Massachusetts, forbear to tell.

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